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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION JUDY A. JEFFREY, DIRECTOR

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Council Bluffs Principal Receives \$25,000 Milken Award

Plourde recognized for his leadership and dedication to students.

DES MOINES, Iowa – Council Bluffs principal Jason Plourde received a 2008 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award this morning during a surprise assembly at Washington Elementary School. The recognition includes a \$25,000 cash prize.

Jane Foley of the Milken Family Foundation presented Plourde with his award and noted his strong leadership and ability to motivate both students and colleagues.

Plourde has served as an elementary teacher in the Council Bluffs School District since 1997. He was appointed principal of Washington Elementary School in the fall of 2006. He recently earned a doctorate in Educational Administration and Supervision from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

His ability to lead and bring people together was vividly apparent just a few months after starting in his new position at Washington Elementary School. In the summer of 2006, Crescent Elementary School in the Council Bluffs Community School District was severely damaged due to a fire. While the building was being re-built, Plourde led his staff and students in welcoming all the Crescent students to the Washington elementary building. The Crescent elementary community was able to experience the best of both worlds as they remained together, but also met many new friends at Washington. As principal of both Crescent and Washington for two years, all in one building, he was instrumental in successfully bringing two groups of children, parents and staff members together to turn a difficult situation into something extremely positive for all involved.

"Jason is a kind, humble man who pursues increased student achievement in a fierce way," said Council Bluffs Community School District Superintendent Martha Bruckner. "He sets his expectations extremely high and assumes that his faculty will work with him to meet those expectations on behalf of students."

Iowa Department of Education Director Judy Jeffrey also praised Plourde for his commitment to students and teachers. "For Iowa to continue to meet the needs of students in the 21st century, all Iowa schools must have leaders who, like Jason, create a clear vision for enhanced student achievement and an environment that supports that vision."

Based on guidelines established by the Milken Family Foundation, the Iowa Department of Education appointed an independent blue-ribbon committee to recommend candidates for the award.

Plourde is among 80 elementary educators nationwide receiving the 2008 Milken Educator Award. This year marks the 22nd year of the Milken Family Foundation (MFF) award with a total of more than

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2,300 recipients nationally. In Iowa, there have been approximately 39 recipients since the award was initiated.

The 2008 recipients will receive their \$25,000 checks during the Milken National Education Conference held April 17-19 in Los Angeles. They will also join the Milken Educator Network, a group of distinguished educators, whose expertise serves as a valuable resource to fellow educators, legislators, school boards and others shaping the future of education.

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The lowa Department of Education works with the State of lowa Board of Education to provide oversight, supervision and support for the state education system, which includes public elementary and secondary schools, nonpublic schools that receive state accreditation, area education agencies, community colleges and teacher preparation programs. The department is committed to high levels of learning, achievement and performance for all students, so they will become successful members of their community and the workforce.